

In the Claims

Please amend claims 1, 5, 6, and 10 as follows, and cancel claims 3, 4, 8, and 9.

1. (currently amended) In a process for the production of 1,3-propanediol wherein an aqueous solution of 3-hydroxy propanal is formed, catalyst, if any, used in said formation is removed from the solution, sodium hydroxide is added to the solution to neutralize [any] acid therein such that the pH is at least about 5, the neutralized aqueous solution is subjected to hydrogenation to produce a crude 1,3-propanediol mixture which is distilled to produce 1,3-propanediol, water, and reactive heavy components, the improvement which comprises replacing the sodium hydroxide with a hydroxide selected from the group consisting of ammonium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, lithium hydroxide, and calcium hydroxide [alkali metal hydroxides other than sodium hydroxide, and alkaline earth metal hydroxides] to reduce the viscosity of the reactive heavy components.

2. (previously presented) The process of claim 1 wherein the pH is in the range of about 5 to about 6.

3. (canceled)

4. (canceled)

5. (currently amended) The process of claim [4]₁ wherein the hydroxide which replaces the sodium hydroxide is potassium hydroxide.

6. (currently amended) A reactive heavy components stream having a viscosity of less than about 100 mm²/s at 40°C, said stream formed by forming an aqueous solution of 3-hydroxy propanal, removing any catalyst used from the solution, adding to the solution a hydroxide selected from the group consisting of ammonium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, lithium hydroxide, and calcium hydroxide [alkali metal hydroxides, other than sodium hydroxide, and alkaline earth metal hydroxides] to neutralize [any] acid therein

such that the pH is at least about 5, subjecting the neutralized aqueous solution to hydrogenation to produce a crude 1,3-propane diol mixture, and distilling said crude mixture to produce 1,3-propane diol, water, and the reactive heavy components stream.

7. (previously presented) The reactive heavy component stream of claim 6 wherein the pH is in the range of about 5 to about 6.

8. (canceled)

9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) The reactive heavy component stream of claim [9]1 wherein the hydroxide which replaces the sodium hydroxide is potassium hydroxide.